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## Her Cynic Mother Banished Illusions

GIBBETED GODS. By Lillian Burnett. The Century Company.

MRS. BURNETT, like Ben Jonson, has a flair for what were once called humors. She is the author of "The Sinister Revel," and in "Gibbeted Gods" she again draws convincingly a very cynical woman. Her story deals with the blight which was thrown over the childhood and later life of Charlotte Baird by Paddy, her adored mother. Paddy had an intense delight in shattering all illusions. She told her daughter that no intelligent person over 7 believed in God any more than



Lillian Burnett

in Santa Claus. The child Mr. Paisley, the minister, and his belief. Paddy swept the school teacher out of the argument by saying that she was in love with the Paisley person. The poor child is crushed.

Mrs. Evelyn Scott is the only writer who is more adroit in depicting unpleasant characters. Paddy is thus described: "But one glance of the tanny eyes, with their baffling quality of reckless mockery, and Paddy stood confessed a cynical woman of thirty-eight with youth long since forfeit to experience. She was vastly amusing, with a random wit, but the cynicism that underlay her most trifling utterances had a strange power of blight."

Edna Ferber has begun work on a new book, although the memories of her wonderful mountain climbing holiday must certainly disturb somewhat her efforts to write about plain people. Perhaps we are wrong. Such a vacation should inspire an author, no matter what her theme. But then, she has other things to worry about. Her plans for this autumn include many lecture engagements. Early in November she expects to be in the middle West and speak in Toledo and Kansas City.

## An Opera Singer's Progress

THE LARK. By Dana Burnett. Little, Brown &amp; Co.

"THE LARK" is an example of the changed goals in fiction. In the earlier type of popular novel the heroine found a man—or let herself be found by one. Burnett's heroine finds herself. And the end of the book is only a beginning. The reader goes on imagining Teresa's life as it will unfold after that transforming discovery.

There is enough "action" in this novel to make a sensational melodrama. Yet the real interest is the inner life of the characters. This development is not analyzed fully, but is rather suggested and left as a series of unanswered questions.

A nameless baby is left at a Cuban convent. There she is cared for especially by one sister—not the least attractive personage in the book. Then comes a wealthy American who undertakes to pay for her musical education. He marries her to shield her from unhappy consequences of his brother's intensive love making.

Teresa does not understand her own feeling for the two brothers. She thinks she hates the one to whom she gave herself. But her husband is wiser than she is. He has a strange clairvoyance. But only after his death does she realize her true relation to him. And in her awakened heart the apparent separation joins them for the first time.

Without any of the machinery of spiritism the book is full of hints of the influence of invisible forces.

Teresa happens to be a singer. This fact is only of importance as a means to the end of her self-realization. Yet her music teacher is himself a real person, with his own questionings as to immortality. Here is a glimpse of the circle in which he lived. He has arranged a "party," though he hates that kind of thing.

"Most of the guests were musicians or had some connection with the musical world. They were a cosmopolitan lot, but their names apparently had been selected from common sources—chiefly Italian and Russian. This applied even to the Americans, so that Richard and Peter and George became in deference to professional superstition Riccardo, Pietro and Giorgio—a translation absurd in itself and generally significant of the fact that America is still largely the musical dependent of Europe.

"Teresa heard one of the guests—an overgrown boy with fair hair and a snub nose— inveighing against this provincialism.

"It makes me sick," he observed, with youthful candor. "You'd think we hadn't any life of our own to express."

"America lacks soul," said the person he was talking to, a pale, stout, little man with fat hands and a kind of gloomy dignity. "She lacks tradition. She hasn't any artistic background."

"No such thing. Plenty of it. Natural and artificial. Niagara Falls and Pittsburgh. The Grand Canyon, the Mississippi River, the Thousand Islands, Santa Fe and Gloucester, Mass. As for tradition, how about the American and Mexican Indians? How about Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett? Why doesn't somebody write an opera about blast furnaces and coal

mines and cattle ranches and Wall Street?

"I wish Edgar Lee Masters would write an opera or that guy Sandburg in Chicago. Burleigh could do the music, or George Cohan. Sandburg and Cohan!"

"Cohan!" exclaimed the stout man in horror.

"Well, he'd write something American, anyway. We've got to come to it, I tell you. The public isn't going on forever swallowing a lot of alien stuff it can't understand simply because it happens to be labelled classical."

"But, my dear fellow, you don't mean to suggest giving up the classics? Art, after all, is universal."

"Rot. Art is native and personal. Listen. There was once a Chinese Emperor who ordered the Chinese classics to be destroyed because he figured they were choking the life out of China. Sometimes I think we ought to do the same thing—chuck the 'classics' into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and start clean for ourselves."

The difficulty with carrying out that suggestion is that there's too much of the said classics in ourselves. We think we are new and radical and modern, with our discoveries of our souls. The young Egyptians and the young Greeks thought so too. A good deal of Burnett's novel is as new as Isis and as old as Plato—though its lovers are far from "Platonic." At any rate it reads well and leaves something to remember and to meditate.

## She Cast a Spell On the Minister

DOGTOWN COMMON. By Percy Mackaye. The Macmillan Company.

A WEIRD legend of Cape Ann forms the basis of Percy Mackaye's saga of witchcraft colored with the half tints of modern psychic phenomena. Judy Rhines, the daughter of the witch who abides on Dogtown Common, whence the men go to the fishing and seldom come back, casts her very human spell upon John Wharf, the minister. A highly spiritual conception is embodied in this echo of local tradition: Mr. Mackaye's irregularly metrical verse is perfectly adapted to the swift current of his narrative that races like a turbid brook down the hillside. The scenes are shown with just the proper mingling of tallow dips and pale blue moonlight. Whittier would have liked this piece, however it might have shocked his gentler habit of mind. Half savage traits of harsh life spent in evading death by drowning on one hand and fire and brimstone from the pulpit on the other, are skillfully indicated, and the eternal feminine glitters through the cloak of rustic clumsiness. The author of "Elsie Venner," too, would have recognized the witch's lantern which has led the poet along his uneven way. The early nineteenth century, illuminated by the fearless understanding of the early twentieth, makes entertaining reading for the sociologist. As poetry, it is more dramatic than musical. This is one of Mr. Mackaye's characteristics.

## One More Oz Book By Frank Baum

THE ROYAL BOOK OF OZ. By L. Frank Baum. Pictures by John R. Neill. Chicago: Reilly &amp; Lee.

"YOU will remember," writes Mrs. Baum in her introductory letter to the children—and to all lovers of the old Wizard in book or play—"that . . . when Mr. Baum went away from this world he left behind some unfinished notes about the Princess Ozma and Dorothy and the jolly people of the wonderful land of Oz. . . . I am sure that Mr. Baum would be pleased

to see these notes brought to life. . . . That handy little help to book reviewers, 'Who's Who in America,' has not yet heard of William Dudley Pelley. But when the 'Who's Who' editor gets around to it, he will make some interesting discoveries. . . . Who's Who will learn that Pelley once failed in a business to which he was not adapted; that he began over again on a low paid newspaper job because he liked newspaper work; that he fell in love with the newspaper's proof-reader and that he still loves her after a score or so of years, during which she has presumably corrected a lot of things besides his copy; that he cuts quite a figure in Vermont's small town journalistic activities; that after four years of perseverance he sold a short story for \$50 and that he has sold many others since; that Pelley and his wife took a belated honeymoon trip to Japan last year; that 'The Fog' is his second novel, his first being 'The Greater Glory.'



## The Scarecrow on His Way

that Ruth Plumly Thomson, who has known—and loved the Oz stories ever since she was a little girl, has made this new Oz story with all the Oz folks in it and true to life."

If ever a man was fortunate in the harvesting of the field he sowed—and left—Frank Baum is that man. And if ever the readers of a good story, who wanted more, were lucky to get another book it is the readers of this "Royal Book of Oz."

There is no sign of patchwork or painful piecing out of scanty material. The story runs on like a river. It deals with the Scarecrow's effort to find out something about his ancestors. He had to go all the way through the earth to get down to the roots of his family tree, and the first thing he knew he was called an ancestor himself!

The story's the thing, but all the way along there are the most delicious bits of word fun that remind us of Alice in Wonderland. For instance, in the land of the slow Pokes, Sir Hokus has a servant named Pid, which gives him—and the reader—the vast satisfaction of yelling when it's time for dinner, "Stew, Pid!" Now don't ask what he did when he wanted roast. Under those circumstances no man of sense would care to order roast. Stew Pid yourself!

## An Adolescence Sans Discipline

THE ROUGH CROSSING. By Sylvia Thompson. Houghton Mifflin Company.

If you are interested in a child's mind and its manner of growth you will be interested in this book. The story is in an English setting, carrying Elizabeth from first impressions quickly forward until the age of 12, and then on more slowly through the years, bringing in her two companions, Phyllis and Dorothea, until in the last chapter she does up her hair and is pronounced by her cousins as too grown up to partake of their play-secrets.

We can find little of a mother's influence here. Her school companions, her boy friends and her teachers, besides her reading, color and mould her young life. We doubt if one would like to have the grown woman for a friend. Maybe we had an abnormal childhood, but we were not allowed to read some of the "stuff" Elizabeth reads, nor have some of the "stylish" clothes she has, nor the apparent freedom she has, but this may be the new method of bringing up children; if it is we prefer the "old fashioned mother."

"She (Elizabeth) pulled the blue enamel hatpin out of her hat, which was tilted over one eye in a way the servants called 'fetching,' she herself considered 'chic,' and her mother described as 'revoltingly second rate.' There are too many imitation mothers in this world. We like to read the stories of children who are closer to real mothers, and who find in mother the biggest and bestest pal of all—until 'the right man' comes.

Maurice Samuel, the author of "The Outsider," a story of a demobilized American in Paris just after the war, which is to be published in the near future by Duffield & Co., was himself a sergeant in the intelligence service in the A. E. F. and was in France, not only during the war but after it, and writes of what he experienced and has seen.

## Everybody loves this book because it is so human and so lovable. INVISIBLE TIDES

By Beatrice Kean Seymour

They all say what the Providence Journal says: "INVISIBLE TIDES must be counted one of the most fascinating and one of the best of recent novels."

THOMAS SELTZER  
5 W. 50th St., N. Y.

## The Small Town's Looking Up

THE FOG. By William Dudley Pelley. Little, Brown &amp; Co.

SEVERAL thousand of the several hundred thousand who read "Main Street" hated the book. They hated it because—well, most of the haters could not tell exactly why. It was too cruelly photographic, it had no "story," it depicted the misery of small town life and left out everything else. These were some of the reasons. If you belong to the "Main Street" haters, incorporated, you are bound to enjoy "The Fog."

That handy little help to book reviewers, 'Who's Who in America,' has not yet heard of William Dudley Pelley. But when the 'Who's Who' editor gets around to it, he will make some interesting discoveries. . . . Who's Who will learn that Pelley once failed in a business to which he was not adapted; that he began over again on a low paid newspaper job because he liked newspaper work; that he fell in love with the newspaper's proof-reader and that he still loves her after a score or so of years, during which she has presumably corrected a lot of things besides his copy; that he cuts quite a figure in Vermont's small town journalistic activities; that after four years of perseverance he sold a short story for \$50 and that he has sold many others since; that Pelley and his wife took a belated honeymoon trip to Japan last year; that 'The Fog' is his second novel, his first being 'The Greater Glory.'

Like Sinclair Lewis, the author of "The Fog," introduces his readers to an assortment of narrow, provincial, bigoted small town folks and small town ways. His people of Paris, Vt., are true types, drawn apparently from the intimate acquaintanceships a small

town editor makes. It is a safe hazard that the favorite occupation of Pelley's townsmen just now is a guessing contest as to the real life identities of "The Fog's" fictional characters, for the story swings along with all the smoothness and movement of actual biography; the biography of a fictional Nathaniel Forge, as set down by his close friend, Bill.

To make another comparison, "The Fog" possesses inspirational qualities which "Main Street" conspicuously lacked. Nathaniel Forge starts off in life from next to nowhere, and after thirty years emerges triumphant from out of the fog created by a hypocritical father, a neurasthenic mother, a common or garden variety of sister, a bevy of village belles, poverty, bad home training, and a boy's side job in the village tannery. The misery and sordidness is, however, brightened and beautified with pictures of the fine types produced by the same environment—such as the hard headed tanner who loves poetry, the school teacher who helps Nathaniel hold fast to his standards, and the old livery stable proprietor who shows himself a philosopher and friend. Then, too, there's the glorious Girl-Without-A-Name and her lovable foster mother.

"He may have been safe as you state," says Bill.

"But I called him out, and he's out until

It's snowing in hell and there's sand on the sea.

That's the kind of an ump I am," says he.

The above is culled from "Hearts and the Diamond," a baseball story by Gerald Beaumont, which is to be published this fall by Dodd, Mead.

## Beat a Land Shark And Won a Bride

THE SPOILERS OF THE VALLEY. By Robert Watson. George H. Doran Company.

"A S surely as there is a wolf-note in some violins, so surely is there a wolf-note in some men. Strike the wolf-note and you set the devils in hell jumping."

Philip Ralston intended to help his partner, Graham Brencfield, by giving him the chance to escape after he had assaulted a banker and robbed the bank. Instead, he himself served five years in Ukala prison.

When he came out, it was his lot to strike the wolf-note in Brencfield, who at first recognizes him but will not publicly admit it.

Brencfield in the five years' time has become a wealthy land owner, grain dealer, and Mayor of Vernock. Incidentally he has built his success on fraud of various kinds.

How Philip uncovers this, follows the criminal to his death, and wins the hand of Eileen Pederstone, forms an exciting tale of romantic adventure in the valley of the Okanagan in western Canada.

As literature, the book is not particularly distinguished, but the author has the happy faculty of making his characters live and move and breathe—and swear—against their background. He evidently forgets that a little "language" goes farther in print than in speech.

As a medium for expressing his own personal convictions, set forth through the different characters as mouthpieces, the book serves him well. Philip says: "I am just beginning to discover that fear is the greatest devil we have to contend with and that the less we worry about it the less real and the more a mere bogey it becomes."

Again, Brencfield deprecates the number of Chinese in the Okanagan. To which the editor of the local newspaper replies: "But you know who brought them here. You fellows with the ranches, looking for cheap help, did it. . . . They're likely to rout us out of house and land before they're through with us."

Eileen Pederstone believes that each man should work for himself, not in the employ of another on salary. She furnishes the incentive that results in a successful real estate business conducted by Philip Ralston and Jim Langford as partners, on commission only.

Comedy is furnished a-plenty through Jim's antics when he occasionally drinks too much, in the days before he becomes a serious business man, and by Sol Hanson, the bla Swede in the smithy. For pathos, there is Smiler, the supposed half-witted dumb boy, who, nevertheless, had brains enough to help others out of many a difficulty. For friendship, there is the relation between Phil and Jim. As for love, Phil's early respect and admiration for Eileen develop normally and wholesomely into the deeper feeling, without undue sentimentality or eroticism, which is saying something these days.

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Fifty years from now, when you and I and most of the books we read are gone, it will be still sought out and read and pondered.

John Macy in the New York Evening Post says: "The excitement and speed of the narrative will, I trust, give it wide popularity, and so soundly establish Mr. Hecht's fortune that he will have no excuse for writing anything but books as good, or better. With those of us who think we know something about literature, his fortune is already secure."

The Weekly Review says: "These pages are full of brilliant and savage satire upon the American scene and upon human nature in general."

The N. Y. Evening Telegram says: "Mr. Hecht has arrived with both feet. There is no other way to put it. It is all devilish clever. But it is not too clever."

Percy Hammond in the New York Tribune says: "It is a brilliant bookful of ideas, phrases, studies and descriptions."

The Detroit News says: "A bizarre, brilliant novel, its hero a poet gone drunk and disorderly through intellectual bootlegging. Its style is opulent with lyric beauty, while epigram lies in wait around every corner."

John V. A. Weaver writes in the Brooklyn Eagle: "Here is a novel that glazes, dazzles, startles with its clear shine, hurts the eyes and the senses of the beholder. It is a mirror held up not to nature, exactly, but to a cinema that utilizes for its projection of nature and life a strong and pitiless light. . . . But, if you want to hear the most powerful voice of the present generation—the generation which is now at the head in life and letters—not the lusty adolescent yell of a Fitzgerald, but a voice which uses words with exactness, with pitiless straightness and the assaulting vehemence of a Mencklen when it wishes, or with a lyric beauty which has been shaped noticeably by the best of Sandburg and Bodenheim, mature, clear-seeing, biased in point of view, of course, as anything must be which is to have a meaning, read this book."

The New York Evening Sun says: "Some of the satire is deadly. It is cleverness raised to the 4th power."

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